

Genesis 3 “The Fall of Man”

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- [0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama.! Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- ! We're going to see that today. We're going to see why we need to be rescued and restored.
- It's because rebellion wrecks relationship. When I was homeschooled, my mom's rule was that once you got all your work done for the day, I could play baseball on the pitchback net that would throw the ball back at me when I threw it to it.
- That's what I love to do. And I remember one day I was six, seven, going through my list of work for the day and seeing the baseball glove sitting there beside me.
- It was promising so much fun. And eventually I gave in. It seemed so much better than the last thing on the list, which was reading a short story.
- [1 : 4 5] How important could that really be? So I just checked it off, put the book away, grabbed the glove and went outside. I had a great time. Later my mom asked if I'd finished all my work for the day.
- Yes! I lied. Didn't take her long. Parents are like this. And asking about that short story that she knew I lied about reading that short story.
- But I stuck to my story. She couldn't prove I hadn't read it. In an effort to help me see my sin, to learn honesty, to build trust with them, my parents made me stay in my room.
- My dad got home from work. I doubled down on the lie to him. I read it, Dad. I read that story. He said, just stay right there. In rebellion, I wanted my way.
- I wanted what I want. I wanted it to work that way. Friends came over for dinner. I stayed in my bed. I could hear them having fun.
- [2 : 5 2] I missed being with my parents. Our relationship was damaged all night. And finally, after several hours, I just couldn't take being distant from them anymore.
- And I confessed my lie. I tell you that because I hope you remember as we look at this familiar temptation and sin story, that these old stories are our story.
- Today, that means a painful story of rebellion-wrecking relationships with a hopeful note of restoration hidden in. Before we read Genesis 3, kids, I want to encourage you to draw a picture of this story.
- Actually, I'd like you to draw two pictures if you like drawing pictures. The first one would be, you know, of like a snake and a tree and a fruit. And you're going to be familiar with those kinds of pictures when we read this story.
- But I want you also to think of a second one that helps you see yourself in the story. See if you can think of something you want often that God hasn't given you.
- [4 : 0 5] Like me looking at that baseball glove thinking, that's what I really want. What does your heart want sometimes that God hasn't given you? If you draw that picture, I'd love to see them afterwards if you'll share them with me.

But before you start drawing, first and foremost, we pay attention to God's word. So let's see what happens in this story to the relationship that we were created for.

God's inspired word, Genesis chapter 3. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.

But God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it, lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die.

[5 : 06] For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes, that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you?

And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. And God said, who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

[6 : 16] Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this that you have done? The woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

And to Adam he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you.

In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.

[7 : 18] For out of it you were taken. For you are dust and to dust you shall return. The man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, behold the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. This is the word of the Lord.

Let's ask for his help. Oh Father how we do need your help. The one who speaks is a sinner.

The ones who hear are sinners. And we need you to speak that we might know ourselves but more importantly know you. And so would you teach us this morning in Jesus' name.

[8 : 28] Amen. As we see conflict introduced into our story. I want you to notice that we have the same struggles with sin.

Plaguing our relationships with God that Adam and Eve had. This first fall is historical with ongoing impact on mankind to this day. It's also a pattern for how we keep struggling with sin.

Rebelling against our creator and wrecking our relationship. So as we see this I want to just warn you. You may recognize a particular struggle of your own.

When I mention specific sins this morning. Please know this. I have personally struggled with every one of these that I will mention specifically.

At some time and in some way. I'm not attacking you. I'm there with you. Our struggles are different. But temptation and sin often show up in very similar ways.

[9 : 36] Watch how sin as it often does begins with distorting. With twisting God's words. The serpent says.

Did God actually say? You shall not eat from any of the trees? The woman does correct him. No just the one tree actually.

But she adds something God never said. Check chapter 2. You must not touch it or you die. One of the reasons that we should immerse ourselves in God's word.

Is so we recognize it. Distortions of it. That fly all around us. From culture. From churches. On the internet. Commentators have noticed here.

That the woman follows the serpent. Not only in distorting God's words. But also in leaving out his covenant name. From this personal way he's identified himself in relationship. Always in the story.

[10 : 35] He is Yahweh Elohim. The Lord God. But Satan and Eve just say God. Perhaps that's a hint to us. That they've forgotten the priority of that personal relationship.

What they were made for. Do you treat God's word lightly? Do you treat God's name lightly? It could indicate that you're beginning to treat God.

And your relationship with him. The reason you exist. Too lightly. Well then notice the serpent's next move. You will not surely die.

The first doctrine being denied. Denied is God's judgment. That he will justly punish sin. As he has promised.

And we say oh it'll be fine. No one will get hurt. In fact it will be fun. There's life over here. Just like that baseball glove calling to me.

[11 : 37] You've had a friend or at least an advertisement say this to you. God won't care. Seriously the Bible is old. And we understand better now what he really would mean.

God knows that. You do you. It'll be great. No friends. The wages of sin has always been death.

Separation from that good relationship. Listen to the serpent continue. Verse 5. You won't die. In fact you will live and be like God.

What's the temptation now? It's to question God's heart. To doubt God's goodness. Can you believe that? The God who gloriously spoke the universe into existence.

The God who graciously created Adam and Eve in his image. Blessing them. The God who generously provided for them all of these different kinds of trees to eat from.

- [12 : 43] Who gave them significant work to do alongside him. Who gave them his very self in relationship with them. Could he not be trusted?
- Was it possible that he was just hiding the good life from them? Is that what he's like? Your eyes will be opened.
- They already were to a glorious garden. Right? You'll be like God. They already were in his image. You'll know good and evil.
- They already did. They walked with goodness himself day by day. It seems unthinkable to have doubted God's goodness. Not trusted his heart, doesn't it?
- We just can't believe Adam and Eve. And yet God created sexuality only to see us decide that we know better when and how to use it.
- [13 : 44] God gave us a Sabbath day for our blessing only to see us decide we know better how to rhythm, work, and rest in our lives.
- God gave us resources to be generous with like him only to see us decide that we actually need to trust ourselves and provide for ourselves. See, our once intimate relationship is growing distant.
- Even hostile to God at times. See, we start wanting to call the shots, don't we? Isn't that what sin is?
- Rebellion against the king? Wanting his throne? Challenging his authority? Y'all, we bristle at living under anyone else's authority.
- Longing to be God. We distort God's word. Deny God's judgment. Doubt God's goodness. And we run out to play with sin.
- [14 : 46] That's how our hearts are always tempted. Verse 6 is the actual fall into temptation. The Bible repeatedly shows us three ways that we're tempted.
- They're all right here. The lust of the flesh. The tree was good for food. That will taste good. That will feel good. I want more. The lust of the eyes.
- Delight to the eyes. That looks pleasant. Pleasurable. I have to have it. The pride of life. The tree was to be desired to make one wise.
- That will make me important. Influential. Better than him. I must control it. Remember this, y'all. Sin begins where?
- In the heart. You can count on that. Coveting. Fearing. Becoming bitter. We tell ourselves it's not hurting anyone. It's just an image on a screen.
- [15 : 46] It's no big deal. It's just what I'm thinking about her. I'm not actually saying it out loud. It's just an obsession.
- I'd never act on it. Oh, we couldn't be more wrong. Ask Adam and Eve. Guard your heart. From it flow the springs of life.
- Guard your heart. But the woman takes the fruit. And eats. Gives some to her husband. Standing idly by.
- And he eats. And they've rebelled. Disobeyed. Their good and gracious. Glorious and generous God. Kids, I hope you've got at least the first picture, okay?
- You got the fruit and the snake. I want you to be thinking about the one that you're in. Start working on that one. The next part of this story shows us how sin impacts us.
- [16 : 45] Immediately what happens? We start hiding from God, don't we? This hiding recognizes that something has indeed been broken in our relationship with God.
- David says in his confession of murder and adultery. God, against you and you only have I sinned. So when God comes walking in the garden, they recognize the sound of his coming and they cover themselves with fig leaves.

And they hide in the trees. From the one who made everything and sees all. Yeah, that'll work. I was afraid, Adam says.

Really? Of God? See, something has changed in the relationship, hasn't it? What a grievous change.

Mankind's reason for existence now shattered. And we hide to this day, don't we? Oh, it's just second nature to us.

[17 : 47] We hide from God, not being honest with him about our struggles. Pretending that we're just getting away with things. And sin makes me feel as if I should hide, right?

I mean, think about that. If I'm already wondering if God loves me and now I've done this, could he possibly? I really better watch out for him.

Do you see broken relationship? I just want distance. I just want that God to stay away from me. But sin breaks our relationships with others too, doesn't it?

The blame game starts. What'd you do, Adam? The woman you gave me. Two people to blame, guys, because we're apparently very good at the blaming.

What'd you do, Eve? The serpent. The devil made me do it. How often we blame other people, other things, and then God.

[18 : 55] This wife you gave me is impossible. This difficulty you put me in, surrounded by people who make more than I do, it makes me covet.

This illness you gave me makes me discontent. Well, then we see sin causing cosmic consequences.

I'm not going to read them in detail for time, but the God whose posture toward his creation is blessing now does what? Curses.

The consequences are cosmic. We'll come back to the serpent, but right at the core of the blessed purpose for the man and the woman, reflecting God's image, what they've been called to do, there's going to be pain in childbearing, where the woman is going to fill the earth.

Fruitless toil in ruling the earth for the man. Nothing works right anymore, because see, rebellion wrecks relationship.

[20 : 00] And that's the summary at the end of the story. God can't let mankind live on his own, calling his own shots, confirmed in that state forever. So he sends him away, out of the garden, away from the tree of life.

Rebellion wrecks relationship. That's what it was and still is, y'all. It's rebellion against the king. The purpose for which he made man is broken.

Sin is devastating to everything good and beautiful. Listen briefly to how Sally Lloyd-Jones describes this in her Jesus Storybook Bible.

This is one of the best stories in the whole book, I think, if you've never read it before. God knew if they ate the fruit, they would think they didn't need him. They would try to make themselves happy without him.

But God knew there was no such thing as happiness without him, and life without him wouldn't be life at all. As soon as the snake saw his chance, he slithered silently up to Eve. Does God really love you?

[21 : 05] The serpent whispered. If he does, why won't he let you eat the nice, juicy, delicious fruit? Poor you. Perhaps God doesn't want you to be happy. The snake's words hissed into her ears and sunk down deep into her heart like poison.

Does God love me? Eve wondered. Suddenly, she didn't know anymore. And a terrible lie came into the world. It would never leave. It would live on in every human heart, whispering to every one of God's children, God doesn't love me.

Usually, Adam and Eve loved to hear God's voice and would run to him. But this time, they ran away from him and hid in the shadows. Terrible pain came into God's heart. His children hadn't just broken the one rule.

They had broken God's heart. They had broken their wonderful relationship with him. And now, he knew everything else would break. God's creation would start to unravel and come undone and go wrong.

From now on, everything would die, even though it was all supposed to last forever. See, sin had come into God's perfect world, and it would never leave.

[22 : 09] God's children would be always running away from him and hiding in the dark. Their hearts would break now and never work properly again. God couldn't let his children live forever, not in such pain, not without him.

There was only one way to protect them. You'll have to leave the garden now, God told his children, his eyes filling with tears. This is no longer your true home. It's not the place for you anymore.

He sent them away on a long, long journey out of the garden, out of their home. Well, in another story, it would all be over, and that would have been the end.

She's hinting at hope before we glance at it. I want to urge you to consider soberly the seriousness of sin. Adam's sin, your sin.

We're a people who love to avoid the hard reality of sin. We like to think the problem is outside us. It's all those other drivers and the silly speed limits, and the solution is inside of us.

[23 : 17] I can handle it. I'm okay. We need to be honest about our sin problem, that we've not only ignored God, rebelled against his rule, but by doing so, we've wrecked the relationship for which we were made.

Some of our sin may look worse than others. All of our sin separates us from God. Oh, that's why it hurts.

Friend, don't stay there apart from him, missing out on what he made you for, telling yourself it's okay. No, no, be honest with yourself.

Talk with a friend or a pastor about what's eating you inside or how it's controlling your words and your actions. Go straight to God with it. You can talk to him right now.

I urge you to do that, because once we're honest about the problem, that sin is breaking our relationships with God and with one another all the time, then we can actually go to the one who can fix it.

[24 : 26] Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. Not us. That's not our hope. Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

This will be brief because the rest of our stories this fall will show us the God who rescues and restores. But I want you to see briefly that's not just something he becomes. It's the way God's been from the very beginning, always full of grace.

Conflict is big here, but foreshadowing of hope and resolution is here too. At least three quick ways. First, God seeks. Adam and Eve are ashamed, hiding from God, and God doesn't even count to ten before he seeks them out immediately.

Where are you? The first question recorded in the Bible. One that shows God knows the relationship has been wrecked and he won't stand for it to be left that way.

The shepherd who would search for the lost sheep over mountain and valley. The father who would run to the lost son to welcome him home. He seeks not just to punish, but to rescue and restore.

[25 : 34] He helps us see our sin and our need for him. Second, God promises. In the midst of his curse upon the serpent, what's called the first gospel promise shows up already.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. There is justice coming to this tempter, this deceiver.

From the seed of the woman, very little we know what that means at this point in the story, but the New Testament writers clearly identify Jesus as the one who crushes the head of the serpent in fulfillment of God's promise to find what's lost, to restore what's been broken.

And finally, we see God's sacrifices to rescue us. Adam and Eve have made what must have been very poor coverings for themselves, right? But at the cost of the life of animals that he made, God provides garments of skins to clothe them.

He sees their shame. He knows their need. And God knows how to handle it. Of course, these animal skins don't atone for the sins of Adam and Eve. Neither will millions of animals sacrificed on the temple altar take away sins.

[27 : 02] But when Christ comes, the once for all sacrifice, he dies once for all to take away sins and bring us back to God.

See, even when he's dealing with our sin, God's working to restore our relationship. He drives them away from the tree of life because the tree of life is in heaven with him and he is the way back for us one day.

When I lay in my bed several hours that day as a child, my parents were not trying to banish me from relationship with them forever, even when it felt like it.

In fact, they kept coming into my room. They kept checking on me. They kept reassuring me of their love. Don't you see that's what God our Father is doing here?

Justly sent away from him, right? But he keeps coming back for us, seeking us in the person of Jesus, promising to forgive our sins, to remove them from us, to remember them no more, sacrificing himself to restore us to relationship with him forever.

[28 : 15] Y'all, there is no other solution available to our sin problem. Thankfully, there's no other solution needed.

That could have been the end. But not in this story. God loved his children too much to let the story end there. Even though he knew he would suffer, God had a plan, a magnificent dream.

One day he would get his children back. One day he would make the world their perfect home again. And one day he would wipe away every tear from their eyes. You see, no matter what, in spite of everything, God would love his children with a never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

And though they would forget him and run from him, deep in their hearts, God's children would miss him always and long for him, lost children yearning for their home.

Before they left the garden, God whispered a promise to Adam and Eve. It will not always be so. I will come to rescue you. And when I do, I'm going to do battle against the snake.

[29 : 28] I'll get rid of the sin and the dark and the sadness you let in here. I'm coming back for you. And he would. One day, God himself would come.

And he has come. And this table is yet one more glimpse of his grace as it points us back to the cross of Jesus, as it points us forward to the wedding supper of the Lamb with him forever when he pours out in the coming ages the riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

It was that night that he was betrayed that Jesus sat with his disciples and he took bread and he broke it and gave it to them as I am ministering in his name.

Give this bread to you. He said, take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same manner after supper, he took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink from it, all of you. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Friends, this is not Southwood's table or the Presbyterian Church's table.

[30 : 53] This is the Lord's table. So if you trust Jesus to deal once and for all with your sins and even today you're a sinner who is repenting and finding forgiveness in your Father, come and eat with us.

If that is not what you believe, perhaps you don't see your sin problem at all, your need for a Savior. You just don't see that. Or maybe you do, but you don't see Jesus as the solution to that problem, then don't come eat this bread and drink this wine, but know that we're glad you're here.

And we'd invite you to consider the offer of Jesus that though there be problem inside of us, there's a solution from outside. You're offered that today in Jesus, the one who loves you and gives himself for you.

Let me pray and then we'll come celebrate together. Jesus, thank you. What an incredible gift of your grace to such undeserving sinners that you would find a way back into relationship with us, the relationship we broke.

Might we know and taste your love for us as you eat with us through common elements. Do something holy in each of us, we ask in Jesus' name.

[32 : 17] Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org. Thank you.